N/ACTION

REP	AF
EUR	FE
CU	INR
P	IO
FBO	AID
COM	FRB
LAB	TAR
XMB	AIR
CIA	NAVY
USIA	NSA

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

AIRGRAM

POL 14 VIET S (1109)

FOR RM USE ONLY

A-193 NO. SECRET HANDLING INDICATOR

RECEIVED
SEP 22 2 41 PM 1967
RS/AR
ANALYSIS BRANCH

EXCISE

TO : Department of State

FROM : Amembassy SAIGON DATE: September 18, 1967

SUBJECT : Supplementary Bio on Nguyen luu Vien

REF : Saigon A-11 POL 14 VIET S
S/S-R

There are attached as enclosures to this airgram:

1. A memorandum by FSO Frederick W. Flott, providing supplementary biographic information on Dr. Nguyen luu Vien, presently Vice Premier, Minister of Cultural and Social Affairs, and Secretary for Culture. Flott is well acquainted with Vien.

2. A copy of Dr. Vien's official biography as reproduced in the 1967 Who's Who in Viet-Nam, and based on information submitted by Dr. Vien himself.

Department will note the contradictions in Who's Who, the Flott memorandum, and our previous information on details of Vien's career between 1946 and 1960.

BUNKER

Enclosures: As stated

Action assigned to
Action Taken NOTED
Date of Action
Office Symbol
Officer

SECRET

FOR DEPT. USE ONLY
☒ In ☐ Out

FORM 4-62 DS-323

:d by: POL:[illegible]/bl 9-18-67

Contents and Classification Approved by: POL:TMRecknagel

ances: POL:THBrown

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY [signature] DATE 12/24/
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

DECLASSIFIED

SECRET

Encl. #1 of 2
A-193 Saigon

MEMORANDUM TO : Mr. John A. Calhoun
Minister Counselor for Political Affairs

FROM : Frederick W. Flott

SUBJECT : Supplementary Biographic Information on Vice Premier Nguyen Luu Vien

1. Per your request, I will set down for the record a few items of supplementary biographic information on Nguyen Luu Vien. I will not repeat any of the basic, conventional biographic information that we know to be a matter of record already. I will try, rather, to set forth some estimates of his character and personality and relationships and views, and in the process perhaps pass some necessarily subjective judgments on him.

2. Vien is very conscious of having served in the Viet Minh. This is very much part of his make-up and part of his political baggage. Unlike most of his Vietnamese political associates (Tran Van Huong is the only exception that comes quickly to mind), he fought the 1945-1954 War of Independence on the side of the Vietnamese rebellion and not on the French side. Although strongly (and far more effectively so than most Vietnamese) anti-communist, he knows at first hand much about communist methods. He claims to know many communist Vietnamese personalities. He has a certain grudging respect for the effectiveness of their methods, for their dedication and leadership, and (more rarely) for them as persons. He feels that the insight he has into this world about what almost all of his associates know little or nothing makes him uniquely valuable.

3. Vien is very much preoccupied with the concept of cadre, more specifically, he is concerned about the fact that whereas the communist side has highly motivated, dedicated cadre, the GVN often seems to have dispirited, self-seeking functionaries. As you know from our dinner with Vien August 20, 1967, he states with obvious satisfaction that he had heard General Giap hold forth on the importance of cadre at staff meetings in 1945 and 1946. He quotes Giap as having made the point (not original to Giap among communists) that "The most important problem is the problem of cadre, because if you solve the problem of cadre, all other problems can be solved". Vien suggests, of course, that the GVN ought to do much more about cadre, and he clearly feels that he could make a contribution in this area.

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

4. Vien has a very low regard for the Vietnamese military. This has come out in many of our conversations over the past four years. It came out most strongly, perhaps, in the spring of 1967, when Vien was passing through Geneva, on the way back to Saigon right after the Adenauer funeral. I asked him how things were going in Vietnam, and if any progress were being made on pacification. He replied that none was being made, "mainly because the Vietnamese military are so totally hopeless". He went on to say that just as they are very bad soldiers, so also they are bad politicians. He said he feared that Ky would be their candidate and that he would be put into office by dishonest elections. If this happened, he said, the war could never be won. Lately, as at our recent dinner with you, Vien has moderated his tone considerably. He acknowledges that the elections were fair and that Thieu will be a reasonably satisfactory president. But his low regard for the officers of the Vietnamese armed forces does not seem to have changed.

5. Vien believes that one of the explanations for what he accepts as Viet Cong superiority over the ARVN in tactical matters and the conduct of operations, is the Viet Cong use of critiques and autocritiques. He acknowledges that any army, including the ARVN, has after action assessments of one sort or another. But he feels the communists have after-action critiques that are particularly meaningful because the lowest ranking soldiers are not afraid to talk and to criticize the concept or the conduct of an operation in which they participated. He says that in the ARVN this could never happen, because the soldiers would be afraid to criticize anything done by their officers. He insists that in the ranks of the Viet Cong such critiques are meaningful, valuable, and, as regards the specifics of good or bad leadership and planning and execution, free and unhindered. He suggests that if he had the power to do so, he would try to change the system and introduce more meaningful critiques into ARVN practice. He sees in such critiques a major source of communist strength, and in their absence, a major cause of ARVN weakness.

6. Relationships. a. Vien is the uncle of Nguyen Khanh, whom he hates for his self-seeking and very damaging political reign. Nevertheless, he regards Nguyen Khanh as one of the bravest and most effective of Vietnamese battlefield leaders.

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

b. Vien is very close to Tran Van Huong. When Huong was head of the Vietnamese Red Cross, Vien was his deputy. He was with Huong in the Caravellist group in April 1960. When Huong had to flee to safe haven in Vung Tau, [redacted] Vien encouraged Huong to run for president and supported him as much as he could prudently do while serving as Vice Premier. He hopes that Huong can be persuaded to serve under President-elect Thieu, perhaps as prime minister.

b-1
ed

c. Nguyen Phu Duc, formerly GVN observer at the United Nations with rank of Ambassador and presently chief of protocol of the Presidency, is his brother-in-law. Duc has many enemies in the Foreign Ministry and, in some measure at least, Vien joins Duc in his dislike of Drs. Do and Quat. Do had Duc removed from his UN post for serious disobedience, and Do fears Vien holds this against him.

d. Foreign Minister Do regards Vien as too much of a regionalist (Southerner), and thinks his appointment to high office would be divisive and otherwise unfortunate.

e. Former Premier Quat disparages Vien as not very able or important, and has on occasion suggested to me that Vien does not know as much about the Viet Minh as he claims. Quat said Vien left Vietnam to study medicine in France after only a year or so with the Viet Minh. Vien states specifically that he served as a physician for the Viet Minh from 1945 to 1954 and went to France for graduate study for the first time in 1956. I believe Vien's statement to be truthful, and Quat's to be a mixture of misinformation and a desire to depreciate Vien.

7. Personality. Vien is outgoing and, for a Vietnamese, unusually hearty and even backslapping. Even his friends agree that he is disorderly in his working habits. He is not a clean-desk-top manager. But he is a very effective personality. Some of his friends, including the psychiatrist Dr. Quyen (the one with a somewhat demented French wife), say that however disorderly Vien may be in his working habits, he has a very rational and orderly mind. They attribute this in part to the fact that his medical specialty is pathology and he is by temperament more oriented towards research than general practice.

DECLASSIFIED

B)-

Present position (date of employment) :

- Deputy Prime Minister concurrently Cultural and Social Affairs Minister and Cultural Affairs Secretary in the Nguyễn Cao Kỳ Government, since July 1966

Former positions (time of employment) :

- Chief Doctor (Thăng Long) 48th Regiment, 1947-1948
- Chief Surgeon 320th Division, 1949-1951
- Deputy Commissioner General for Refugees, 1954
- Minister of Interior in the reshuffled Nguyễn Khánh Government, 1964
- First Deputy Prime Minister concurrently Minister of Interior in the Trần Văn Hương Government, 1964
- Lecturer, Faculty of Medicine, Saigon University
- Physician, Chợ Rẫy Hospital
- Head, Pasteur Institute Laboratory

Decorations, awards : none

Political activities (parties in which you have been active in the past) :

- Commissioner in charge of Medical Affairs, Thanh Niên Tiền Phong, Trà Vinh 1945
- Went to North VN to continue the Resistance, 1946
- Left the Resistance, 1951
- Drafted and signed the CARAVELLE letter, 1960
- Imprisoned by the Ngô Đình Diệm Government after the November 11.1960 coup
- Member, Council of Notables after November 1. 1963

Associations, Clubs, Unions :

- President, Việt Nam Red Cross Association, 1958-1960

Publications : none

Special remarks : none

Present address : 152 Công Lý, Saigon

Telephone : 91.166

nlv0667

DECLASSIFIED

A)-

Encl. 2 of 2
A-193 Saigon

Full name : Nguyễn Lưu Viên

Pseudonym or Pen name : none

Profession : Medical Doctor

Date and place of birth : November 21, 1919, Trà Vinh (South VN)

Education (degree, name of institution, date of graduation) :

- Medical Doctor, Hanoi University, 1946

Full name of spouse : Nguyễn Thị Trinh

Date and place of birth of spouse : October 12, 1923, Hà Đông (North VN)

Names and ages of children :

- Sons : Nguyễn Thành Vinh, b. September 27,194
Nguyễn Lưu Phúc , b. December 16,195
Nguyễn Lưu Bảo , b. February 2,1956

- Daughters : none

Father's name : Nguyễn Thành Phương (deceased)

Profession : Land owner

Mother's name : Trần Thị Ngọc

Profession : Land owner

Name of spouse's father : Nguyễn Khánh Đắc

Profession : Presiding Judge (ret.)

Name of spouse's mother : Nguyễn Thị Ánh (deceased)

Profession : Housewife

DECLASSIFIED